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ABSTRACT

An introduction to a symposium on interactive video, this brief paper announces that the symposium will continue the debate on whether media are simply delivery vehicles for instruction by considering the inherent properties of interactive video and its impact on achievement, including the way in which the properties of this medium both dictate the form of the transmitted message and influence the way a student processes information. An analogy is drawn in which the medium is equated with the singer and the message with the song. It is also announced that this discussion will be provided from several points of view by the five symposium speakers: (1) Richard E. Clark, University of Southern California; (2) Michael A. Yacci, Rochester Institute of Technology; (3) Claudia Pask-McCartney, Syracuse University; (4) Elisa J. Slee, Syracuse University; and (5) Barbara L. Grabowski, Syracuse University. (13 references) (CGD)

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INTERACTIVE VIDEO SYMPOSIUM: THE SINGER OR THE SONG-- AN EXTENSION OF CLARK'S MEDIA RESEARCH DISCUSSION

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SYMPOSIUM CHAIR:

Barbara L. Grabowski

SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS:

Richard E. Clark
Michael A. Yacci
Claudia Pask-McCartney
Elisa J.Slee
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DISCUSSANT:

Clint Wallington

Symposium presented at the 1989 Annual Convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, Dallas, TX.

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INTERACTIVE VIDEO SYMPOSIUM: THE SINGER OR THE SONG-- AN EXTENSION OF CLARK'S MEDIA RESEARCH DISCUSSION

SYMPOSIUM INTRODUCTION

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Are media simply delivery vehicles as Clark (1983) has suggested? Do media really not influence learning? Is interactive video the one medium that will prove the age old argument presented by many of our leaders for the past 40 years wrong? Or, in fact, will interactive video be the one medium that will be spared from trivialized media comparison studies?

Since the late 70's when interactive video became a reality, many designers and researchers discussed whether its existence represented a "new" medium to be probed and researched to identify instructional prescriptions specific to this medium or whether it, in fact, was just another instructional tool (Hannafin, 1983, Grabowski, 1983, Grabowski & Pearson, 1988). During this same decade, Clark and others also revived an age old discussion advising that the important prescriptions will come from research on "instructional strategies" and cautioned against more trivial media comparison research (Clark & Snow, 1975, Clark, 1983, 1985, 1987, Clark & Salomon, 1987, Clark & Sugrue, 1988, Cohen, 1984).

When addressing the issue of the impact of the medium of interactive video on achievement, we felt that some of the inherent properties of a medium must be considered as McLuhan's (1967) tenet of "medium instead of message" would tend to suggest. The actual properties of the interactive videodisc itself will according to Cohen (1984) "ultimately dictate the essential form of the message transmitted on it and influence the way a student processes the information." While there is an obvious difference between a car and an iconic representation as McLuhan and Cohen suggest--is there any real difference between a car crash on videotape versus a car crash on videodisc? Using the same reasoning, we, then, consider this argument from the perspective of whether it is the "singer or the song" that will impact on our "learning" and motivation toward learning.

The purpose of this symposium, then, is to combine these two issues and reconsider this discussion in light of past, and current research on and with interactive video.

Included in this discussion are several points of view from a general consideration of Marshall McLuhan's the "medium is the message" to potential motivational effects of the medium. From this general point of view, we move to a specific review of past and current research on and with interactive video to determine if Clark's cautions are being heeded for this medium. Finally, the symposium concludes with some reflections on why media comparison studies continue and suggestions are made for possible appropriate areas for future research.

The symposium participants include:

Dr. Richard E. Clark
University of Southern California

Dr. Clark, the most distinguished leader in this discussion of the effects of media, also leads off the symposium. With the support of educational research, he presents "counter-intuitive" responses to six major areas of disagreement with regard to the use of interactive videodisc. His presentation sets the stage for the papers that follow.

Michael A. Yacci
Rochester Institute of Technology

Yacci attempts to bring McLuhan's issues to the forefront as he discusses Clark's argument and points out some different issues that have not yet been resolved.

Claudia Pask-McCartney
Syracuse University

Pask-McCartney extends the issues of achievement to issues behind what constitutes motivation and whether the medium affects motivation.

Elisa J. Slee
Syracuse University

The whole purpose of this discussion comes to light with Slee's presentation on the state of the research, as far as we could analyze in terms of reported research. She has taken the lead in reviewing the body of interactive video literature since 1983, and will present our findings from this review and analysis.

Barbara L. Grabowski
Syracuse University

Grabowski then concludes the discussion by considering reasons why we continue to see media comparison research reported in the literature. She, then, suggests areas for future research with and on interactive video.

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